



Lake County Sheriff 's Office

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From the desk of Marine Patrol Deputy Sheriff Dale Pohto...

7 Tips for Watching Fireworks on the Water

Talk about the best of both worlds! Enjoying a fireworks show from your boat is a wonderful way to combine two favorite activities. There's just something about seeing the bright reflections off the water that makes you feel like you're getting double the entertainment. And if you've only experienced a fireworks show from dry land, you are in for a real treat.



Challenges:

- It will be dark
- It will (probably) be crowded

Just recognizing those two factors will go a long way in terms of helping prepare for the festivities. Here are some tips to help you enjoy the evening:

- Check that all running and anchor lights are working properly.
- Make sure you have all of your safety equipment including a whistle (or other approved noise-making advice)
- Remember you need life jacket for everyone on board. Sometimes you'll have more passengers than usual for a special trip like this, so a life-jacket count is important. Remember that water-enforcement authorities will be out in numbers.
- Use ear protection for children or hearing-sensitive adults. The sound of exploding fireworks is greatly amplified across open water.
- *Think about leaving pets at home.* The disorienting lights and loud sounds can cause anxiety in even the calmest animal. And there are already enough distractions for the captain and crew.

- Find a good spot well before the show starts. Whether you're beaching, rafting with other boats, or dropping anchor in open water, you will not regret getting there a little early and staking your claim (well outside the restricted area around the launching platform) while there's still some daylight.
- For the safety of your passengers and other boaters, keep libations off limits for the captain and vital crew. You will have plenty of things to keep track of before, during and after the show.
- Don't add to the show. That means turning off all non-required lights onboard and never launch your own fireworks from the boat. It just detracts from the viewing experience for your boat and everyone around you.
- Keep your radio off or turned down. There will be plenty of ambient noise and sounds to keep you occupied.
- Don't be in a hurry to leave. Most accidents happen when there's a mad dash back to the dock. Often the ones in a hurry have not heeded the advice to stay away from the holiday "spirits." You've already taken the time to get set up and properly anchored. Enjoy the mass exodus and a sky full of stars while the crowds file out of the area.

Enjoying a fireworks show from the water is one of the great delights for any boating family. It's an experience you won't forget. And with a few precautions and a little planning, you can make it an experience you can enjoy safely.